

CLAIMS

1. A device for imposing a negative pressure on the surface of the heart comprising a housing having a bottom surface shaped to engage the surface of the heart, a plurality of suction ports having openings disposed in the bottom surface of the housing, a vacuum line operably connected to the suction ports.
2. The device of claim 1 further comprising a means for introducing a negative pressure located in the interior of the housing.
3. The device of claim 2 wherein the means for introducing a negative pressure is comprised of a pressure conducting space connected to an inlet and to each suction port.
4. The device of claim 2 wherein the housing is annular and has a plurality of suction ports disposed about the periphery.
5. The device of claim 4 further comprising at least one instrument port located in the annular housing.
6. The device of claim 2 wherein the housing is dome-shaped.

7. The device of claim 6 wherein the means for introducing a negative pressure is comprised of an inlet and a pressure conducting chamber connected to each suction port.

8. The device of claim 6 further comprising at least one instrument port located in the dome-shaped portion of the housing.

9. The device of claim 8 wherein the instrument port is further comprised of means for attaching an instrument.

10. A device for imposing a negative pressure on the surface of the heart comprising: a shaft attached to a suction port assembly, wherein said suction port assembly is comprised of a block having a plurality of suction ports disposed therein, and wherein said block is attached to a vacuum line.

11. The device of claim 10 wherein the openings of the plurality of suction ports are disposed in the bottom surface of the block.

12. The device of claim 11 further comprising means for introducing a negative pressure contained within said block and connected to each of said plurality of suction ports.

13. The device of claim 12 comprising a pair of shafts interlinked by a pivot, wherein each shaft is attached to a suction port assembly.

14. The device of claim 12 wherein the suction port assembly is comprised of an array of said plurality of suction ports, wherein each suction port has a passage communication with a pressure conducting space on the interior of said block, and wherein the pressure conducting space has an inlet and is attached to a vacuum line affixed to the shaft.